Both 'One' and 'Other': Environmental Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Hybridity in Costa Rica

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ABSTRACT

Cosmopolitans are frequently characterized as living and perceiving the world and their environment from a distance. Drawing on ethnographic work among a small group of Western migrants in Costa Rica, we complicate this portrayal in a number of ways. First, we demonstrate that these people think in similar kinds of ways as social theorists: they too are worried about living at a distance from place and are seeking what is, in their way of reckoning, a more engaged relationship with their surroundings. Second, however, we explore the social context and corollaries of these migrants' attempts to bring together a putatively "modern/cosmopolitan" way of relating to place and surroundings and a "traditional/place-based" way of relating to surroundings. Specifically, we demonstrate how migrant claims to transcend the differences between "tradition" and "modernity" create new forms of social exclusion as they, both literally and figuratively, come to claim the place of "the other."

KEYWORDS

cosmopolitanism, migrants, hybridity, environment, tradition, modernity

Introduction: Cultural Anxieties and Alternative Cosmopolitanisms

Szerszynski and Urry (2006: 113) have argued that "humans increasingly inhabit their world only at a distance." This view from afar, they claim, is an intrinsic sociocultural condition of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism is a difficult term to define. Beck and Sznaider (2006) usefully distinguish between normative cosmopolitanisms, that is, a cultural ideal of one sort or another, and cosmopolitanism as a way of sociologically describing and thinking about the significance of social processes that exceed both the real and imagined boundaries of the nation-state. Szerszynski and Urry's argument is that increased mobility and expanding visual cultures create a sense of detachment from

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place and locality and generate normative cosmopolitan perspectives characterized by a "greater sense of both global diversity and global interconnectedness and belonging" (2006: 122). Construed in this way, cosmopolitanism may be seen as akin to that environmentalist perspective whose understanding of nature is of something global and universal, ultimately separate from, even if variously threatened by or responsive to, human interventions and protection in particular places or localities (Milton 1996: 175–187).

Critics of cosmopolitanism have argued that detachment reflects the situation of a relatively elite minority. It fails to describe the majority of people who not only identify themselves in terms of particular places but also are variously constrained by real material circumstances and struggles within particular localities (Friedman 2002). Similarly, critics of a globalizing environmentalist discourse suggest that there were and remain alternative ways of understanding the world in order to reflect a more engaged and embedded relationship with place and surroundings (Ingold 2000). Whether or not the experience of detachment is understood to be a generalized condition of (post)modernity or a characteristic of cosmopolitan elites, it is clear that many social theorists perceive detachment from place and surroundings as a cause for concern (Escobar 1999; Ingold 2000; Szerszynski and Urry 2006). Szerszynski and Urry (2006), for example, draw on and extend Ingold's (2000) critique arguing that the modern perception and experience of place characterized by "globes," "landscapes," and "map-readers" is displacing more traditional perceptions of place characterized by "spheres," "taskscapes," and "way-finders" with, they suggest, potentially devastating consequences both for social life and the environment. What is needed, they contend, citing Latour (2004, in Szerszynski and Urry 2006: 127), is an alternative form of cosmopolitanism: one that engenders not only greater global awareness and sensibilities but also genuine engagements with place and surroundings.

This paper investigates one example of an alternative form of cosmopolitanism, drawing on an ethnographic pilot study conducted in the summer of 2002 among a group of European migrants living and working in a small village on the northwest coast of Costa Rica. The people we describe were not cosmopolitan elites, but they were a relatively privileged group of people who shared normative cosmopolitan perspectives and expressed global environmental concerns. Like the social theorists cited above, they too expressed concern about living detached lives. For these people, movement from one place to another was both a literal and symbolic journey from "modern" to more

"traditional" ways of relating to place and surroundings. That movement was not conceived of, however, as a simple or absolute move from one state to another. They did not, in other words, want to *be* traditional people, only to learn from and become *like* them in respect of their presumed greater knowledge of place and surroundings. Their movement toward new ways of living and working was conceived of as bringing together the best elements of both the traditional and the modern: the remedy proposed by Szerszynski and Urry (2006) was echoed in the attempts of these mobile cosmopolitans to find new ways to live in places they imagined to be closer to nature.

Our ethnographic study of these migrants raises a number of interrelated points for thinking about and assessing alternative cosmopolitanisms. First, we are concerned with the particular social context and corollaries within which people articulate different ways of relating to place and nature, and we ascribe them to different sorts of people that inhabit those places. In the situation described below, migrants' claims to greater engagement (over and against others who are deemed to be more or less detached) are about claims to place and belonging in a country that is not their own. The point is that the use of categories to identify one's own or others' relationship to place and surroundings must be seen in terms of the social context within which they are expressed and the political uses to which they are put (Bender 1993, 1998; Bender and Winer 2001).

The second issue is about what counts as engagement and, more specifically, who and what qualifies as the "traditional." What migrants consider to be "traditional" in this situation was largely conditioned by what they expected traditional people and knowledge to look and be like. When people who were supposed to act in recognizably "traditional" ways did not conform to expectations of appropriate engagements with their surroundings, they were considered to be out of place: neither appropriately modern nor authentically traditional. The point is that what counts as the particular, the local, or the traditional is always contingent and conditional on the terms and process through which it is recognized and established in dominant discourse (Ingold and Kurttila 2000; Chernala 2005; Choy 2005; West 2005).

Finally, we think it is important to situate migrant concerns about detachment, their search for alternative ways of living, and their appropriations of the traditional within a broader historical and postcolonial perspective (Torgerson 2006). While rational control over and distance from nature has been a defining characteristic of Western modernity, this has historically been accompanied by a nostalgic sense of loss and

longing for a primitive state of living within nature and various attempts to reconcile, both philosophically and practically, the "traditional" and the "modern" (Grove 1996; Argyrou 2005). The primitive, the indigenous, the traditional peasantry and rural "other"—whether geographically outside of the "West" or existing on the boundaries or in the marginal spaces of the "West"—have always been a necessary figure in the Western imaginary, insofar as these "others" confirm the possibility of these other ways of being in the world. Nonetheless, there has been a discursive shift over the last century in mainstream Western culture from negative perceptions of those others as being culturally inferior because of their association with nature to their positive valorization within recent environmental discourse as culturally superior because of that presumed proximity to nature (Milton 1996; Argyrou 2005). Our point here, however, is that just when the traditional has begun to be accorded some political legitimacy and purchase in environmental terms, people who might otherwise claim that distinction not only are increasingly disqualified as not being suitably traditional but also their place at the table has been claimed, and the stakes of the game raised, by others who contend that what is required is the best of both the traditional and the modern.

Migration, Tourism, and Environmentalism in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is often regarded as being unique among Central American countries for a number of reasons: it has no armed forces (although the police are extremely well armed); stable democratic institutions; comparatively good health, welfare, and educational systems; and a relatively healthy economy (Daling 1998). It is celebrated for the splendor and diversity of its natural environment and a variety of travel guides and brochures collected in the region describe it as a *jewel of nature,* a *green land of peace, Noah's Ark,* and, as also noted by Daling (1998: 4), the *Switzerland of Central America.* More than any other Latin American country it has been successfully marketed (both by the government and by local and international entrepreneurs) as a premiere ecotourism destination for visitors and investors alike.

For these and other reasons, it is not only a major tourist destination but also one of the few countries in the region to have had substantial immigration. The majority of immigrants are from neighboring Central American countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, with Nicas in particular estimated as making up roughly 15 per-

cent of Costa Rica's population of approximately 4 million (U.S. Department of State 2006). However, there has also been a small, but significant and increasing, number of relatively affluent immigrants from North America and, to a lesser extent, Europe, estimated to number 30,000 to 50,000.[1] These include leisure and retiree migrants, some of whom maintain homes in both their countries of origin and in Costa Rica, and others who have moved to Costa Rica to live and work on a semipermanent or permanent basis.

North Americans and Europeans have generally found it easy to move to and settle in Costa Rica. This is largely an effect of "race" and economic power, but, we would argue, it is also related to the fact that both previous and contemporary settlers have been able to mobilize a discourse that has identified them with nature protection and conservancy. In fact, the history of conservation in Costa Rica is one in which expatriate settlers have played an important, if sometimes overstated, role (Evans 1999). Perhaps the most widely known example is that of the North American Quakers who settled in Monteverde in the 1950s. Their invitation to North American scientists to visit and study the area in the 1960s eventually led to the establishment of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve in the 1970s (Vivanco 2006: 54–63). Similarly, in the Nicoya Peninsula in northwestern Costa Rica, the nature reserve of Cabo Blanco (created in 1965) was in part founded owing to the activism of a retired Swedish officer and his Danish wife who had "moved to the peninsula in 1955 to live a simpler life and raise organic fruit" (Evans 1999: 61).

Though the number and variety of settlers have increased over the years, the discourses and imaginings of the migrants that we describe in this paper are clearly part of a process that has been going on for several decades. This does not mean, however, that Euro-American migrants have always been welcomed. As Vivanco (2006) suggests, some *campesinos* (and other Costa Ricans) feel their roles as traditional guardians of nature and as environmental activists have been overshadowed by northerners. Moreover, Ticos (Costa Ricans) sometimes express resentment about the perceived preferential treatment given to wealthy "gringos" and frequently lament the fact that the majority of prime coastal property is now owned by foreigners, effectively turning Ticos into tourists in their own country (Biesanz et al. 1999: 54, 121).

Costa Rican ambivalence provides at least a partial explanation for the continuing need that some Euro-American migrants have to legitimate both their ownership of land and their claims to place and belonging. Our interest here is in exploring how this legitimacy is con-

structed through contrasts drawn by one particular group of migrants between the ways in which they and others understand and relate to place and nature. We are also interested in the discursive shifts taking place in what Vivanco (2002: 223) describes as the "culture of nature," by which he means the different ways of thinking and talking about "the boundaries between nature and culture" that are part of the everyday politics of place in Costa Rica.

Specifically, the discourse of earlier Western settlers in Costa Rica tended to reproduce and align them with a global environmental discourse that privileged rational scientific understandings and interventions, over and against those who were identified with traditional and putatively backward practices. Among the migrants we are concerned with in this paper there is, as suggested in the introduction, a far more subtle discourse. That discourse echoes the desire of previous settlers to live a "simpler life" more in tune with nature. However, it also recognizes the importance of traditional knowledge acquired through practical engagements and seeks to synthesize a different way of relating to place and surroundings, one that brings together both the "traditional" and the "modern."

Ethnographic Situation: Green Cosmopolitans in Guanacaste, Costa Rica

The migrants we describe in this article live in a small, relatively sleepy village along the northwest Pacific coast of Costa Rica. Inevitably the village is set to change, as there is a major road renovation program being undertaken that will make access between towns, villages, and the nearest airport much easier (Clower 2007). The village also lies between two major tourism developments and close to a national marine reserve for leatherback turtles. It is composed of a number of small hotels and restaurants, a primary school, a few shops, and a row of houses of various descriptions that run along one side of the beachfront. Most of the village residents are recent settlers having moved to the area in the last five or ten years, the bulk of them from Nicaragua or other parts of Costa Rica. However, among the settlers are a dozen or so European migrants, approximately half of whom have lived in Costa Rica, though not necessarily in this particular village, for more than 10 years.

The migrants included an Italian family who owned and ran a restaurant in their home, a family (made up of a German man, a Costa

Rican woman, and their two children) who lived on and ran a small hotel and campground fronting the beach, a German family who owned a small hotel and restaurant but lived on a farm about 4 km inland, and two single men (one Dutch, the other German), one of whom worked as the chef in the German family's hotel and restaurant and the other of whom worked in property management for an American who was developing a coastal estate and leisure complex near the village.

The European migrants living in this village could not be categorized as elite cosmopolitans, at least as that group is defined by Friedman (2002). They are, nevertheless, privileged migrants with cosmopolitan concerns and characteristics. While the migrants were not wealthy, they were well off compared with the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan village residents, most of whom had settled on unoccupied land along the beachfront and are variously involved in small-scale gardening and fishing, and working mainly as unskilled labor in the tourism and leisure industries, including a few who work in the hotel and restaurant owned by the German couple in the village. Moreover, as important as their economic position was the fact that these individuals also had symbolic and social capital. They possessed symbolic capital because they both possessed an ascribed status as Europeans and were generally well educated and conversant in current events and politics and able to use the language of environmentalism—an important discourse within Costa Rican context. Social capital could be seen, amongst other things, in terms of access and ability to cultivate networks of other expatriates beyond the immediate locality.[2]

These residents had cosmopolitan characteristics inasmuch as they routinely described themselves as "world citizens" and did not see their country of origin as providing the primary or exclusive point of identification. Moreover, they clearly articulated an appreciation for cultural difference and cultivated openness to other places and people. Thus, for example, those couples that had children sent them to local Costa Rican schools, rather than to international or American schools (of which there was one just outside the village). While the cost of the latter may have also been a factor in their choice of where to send their children to school, what was emphasized by the parents was that they saw children's attendance at local school and their engagements with other Tico children as an important part of their multicultural education, and as also one further means for them as foreigners to meet and interact with local Ticos.

Although these European migrants gave a variety of reasons for choosing to leave their country of origin, ranging from the desire to

get away from the excessive materialism of the West to fleeing the demands of an ex-wife, most said that the primary motivation for relocating to Costa Rica was the natural environment, placing importance on living in harmony with nature. For example, the couple owning the small hotel and campground said that they run their business and live their lives in a holistic ecological way, growing their own food in the campground and advertising their ecofriendly credentials on the Internet. The expatriate couple who owned a slightly larger hotel and restaurant, but lived on a farm, similarly saw themselves as seeking to live and work in an environmentally friendly way. However, they did not openly advertise their ecocredentials, regarding the "eco" label as being overdone and suspect in the Costa Rican context. The following explores in more detail how these migrants talked about themselves, their work, and their lives in Costa Rica, drawing on conversations with three of our expatriate interlocuters: Johann, Peter, and Bridgette (all pseudonyms).

Johann was a single man from the Netherlands who had worked his way around various places and hotels in Costa Rica. He was hoping to settle down and had recently met and was involved in a relationship with a local Tico woman. In many respects Johann did seem to represent the mobile cosmopolitans described by Szerszynski and Urry (2006). In our conversations before the evening restaurant rush, Johann often talked about Costa Rica in ways that reflected a view of nature and surroundings as something to be appreciated or worried about as a detached observer and consumer. For Johann, however, appreciating the glorious sunsets was only one aspect of his encounters with place and surroundings. Johann told us that one of the reasons he had moved around so much in Costa Rica was that he was looking for a working environment that would allow him to acquire a real "feel" for the place and people.

His concern with and attachment to locality was mainly expressed and embedded in his working practices as a chef. Specifically, he told us with pride that he sourced all of his food locally, buying meat from a local butcher, getting fruit and vegetables from local producers, and buying fish straight off the boat from local fishers who would pull up on the beach. He was especially keen to draw a distinction between what he did as compared to what the large, all-inclusive leisure/hotel complex next door did, that is, sometimes shipping in food not only from other parts of Costa Rica but also from other parts of Latin and North America. He felt that while he respected and, significantly, added value to the local environment and producers, the large-scale, inter-

nationally owned leisure complexes that were being developed along coastal areas had little or no engagement with place and did not value the land or environment other than as a means to developing their capitalist ventures.

Peter and Bridgette, originally from Germany, had lived in Costa Rica for more than ten years and had a long-term commitment to it. They were not just buying property but making a small working farm and ranch where they stabled horses and offered rides to tourists, both along coastal paths and also into "traditional" local villages. At the time that we met them they had plans to expand their hotel, having, in principle, secured the necessary permits and concession from the municipal government. Their children attended local Costa Rican schools, and while maintaining contact with and making periodic visits back to Germany, they regarded themselves as long-term settlers in Costa Rica.

Peter and Bridgette were keen to point out the differences between themselves and large-scale tourism developers, differences also stressed by Johann and the other migrants we spoke to in this village and elsewhere in the region who were involved in small-scale tourism. Those developers, Peter said, were simply out to make as much money as possible and had little respect for or knowledge of place or people. He said that while these big developers often talked about care for the environment and advertised themselves as being ecofriendly, in fact they were responsible for denuding the forest and acting in environmentally irresponsible ways. He cited, as an example, a very large tourist complex facing the next beach down from the village. Among other things, the complex had a golf course built on land that had previously been forest. There, so the advertisement went, one could play "eco-golf." The beach had once been a nesting site for leatherback turtles, and while the occasional turtle still laid eggs there, the numbers had decreased significantly since the development of the complex.

Contrasting the corporate developers with themselves, Peter and Bridgette said they took great pride in acquiring a working knowledge of the land, and they saw themselves as actively involved in preserving what they understood to be a more authentic Tico way of life that was rapidly on the wane. Peter described to us, for example, how he was paying older *campesino* women from an inland village to tell him local plant lore, their different uses as medicines and food, so he could write them down. Similarly, both Peter and Bridgette recounted how they relied on the experience of Tico *cabañeros* both in animal husbandry and in negotiating their way around the countryside.[3] The

latter was particularly important for Bridgette, who was more closely involved on a daily basis with tending the horses and managing their small farm. In this respect they saw themselves as being like traditional *campesinos* and *cabañeros,* who treated their natural surroundings as something to be lived in, worked with, and taken care of, rather than simply lived off or sold for quick money.

As these two examples demonstrate, the migrants we spoke with clearly seek to become more embedded within place and surroundings. While involved in tourist enterprises, they define themselves in opposition to those other "moderns"—capitalist developers—who live at a distance from place and positively identify with those engaged in what they perceive to be a "traditional" relationship with their surroundings. The latter is no doubt in part what Ingold and Kurttila (2000) describe as "modern traditional knowledge (MTK)," the desire to codify and preserve a readily transmissible form of cultural knowledge identified as "traditional." The latter is explicitly seen in Peter's recording of *campesino* plant lore. However, these expatriate settlers also talk about respecting and seeking to learn from what Ingold and Kurttila refer to as "local traditional knowledge (LTK)": that is, to acquire through working with and alongside local *campesinos* and *cabañeros,* something of their more intimate and close-lived relationship with and knowledge about place and surroundings. However, none of the migrants that we spoke to ever claimed that they aspired to or could ever become completely like "traditional" Costa Ricans. Rather, the way they talk about the need to learn from the "traditional" ways of relating to place and surroundings echoes Szerszynski and Urry's (2006) call for a new kind of cosmopolitanism. Specifically, as discussed above, these settlers articulate what might be seen as an alternative kind of cosmopolitan hybridity: one that draws on what they perceive to be the best elements of tradition and modernity while discarding the worst to articulate a new and progressive relationship to the environment.

The "Other" Side of Hybridity: Squatters as Neither One nor Other

The expatriate settlers we are talking about in this paper never explicitly used the term "hybrid" in reference to themselves or their cultural projects. However, we think it is empirically appropriate and analytically useful to describe what they talk about in terms of hybridity. First, they consciously see themselves as attempting to think and do things

in a way that brought together and combined elements, or ingredients, of different ways of living and thinking and cook them in new ways: moving to Costa Rica was for all of them about finding a different way of living. Second, while they appreciated and sought to learn from the various skills and knowledge of those local people they perceived to have an intimate acquaintance with their surroundings, they presumed neither that they would ever acquire the same kind of relationship to the land that these people had nor that they would ever lose the knowledge and skills, and indeed some of the prejudices, they had acquired as people socialized into modern capitalist ways of thinking.

We think hybridity is analytically useful because it highlights some of the paradoxes and contradictions involved. On the one hand, labeling what these expatriate settlers are attempting as hybrid at the very least calls attention to the fact that they do not neatly fit into the overdrawn dichotomization of people into locals and globals, traditionals and moderns, each of whom have distinct ways of perceiving and understanding the environment and their surroundings. The problem with such overgeneralized distinctions or "covert essentialism[s]" (Carrier 2003: 20) is that they obscure the complex coexistence of apparently contradictory understandings and relationships that exist in specific historical situations.

On the other hand, however, it is also clear that the expatriate settlers themselves drew on and reinforce these categories and distinctions in ascribing different ways of relating to different groups of people and understanding the environment. In this sense, as both critics and advocates of the concept suggest (Friedman 1999; Pieterse 2001), hybridity is dependent on categorical boundaries, even as it variously challenges and reinscribes them. Moreover, these classificatory processes do not take place in a vacuum: rather, as already indicated, they are developed and deployed within specific social contexts as a way to claim social authority, enact and affirm social distinctions, and legitimate claims to place and belonging over the claims of others. In claiming to combine the best of both the modern and the traditional, the expatriate settlers not only define themselves in distinction from those who are seen to belong to these respective categories, the capitalist developer and *campesino*; rather, they also define themselves in opposition to another group of people who might be seen as representing the "other" side of that alternative cosmopolitan hybridity: namely, those who are categorized and classified as squatters.

Squatters are poor Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans who, like the migrants themselves, were recent incomers who had built homes and

occupied small parcels of land fronting the beach. Although putatively referring to the fact that these were people who had, as yet, no formal entitlement to the land they occupied, their designation as squatters by Western migrants (and others) references a much broader and more pejorative set of ascribed characteristics. Before going into this, however, we want to note that two of the expatriate families had land within the *Zona Marítimo Terrestre* or Marine Terrestrial Zone (the 200-meter zone within which building and land ownership is technically restricted), and their legal standing was as questionable as the land settled by those they deemed to be squatters. While the land claimed by the couple owning the hotel and restaurant was in a preliminary draft of a *Plan Regulador* (a municipal plan that grants concessionary property rights), the status of the plan itself was uncertain as it apparently had yet to come into effect. Meanwhile, their neighbors, who ran the small hotel and campground, did not have their property registered in the municipal plan and so could claim rights only on the basis of occupation and improvements to the land. Perhaps because of these insecure claims, conversations about squatters did not usually center on questions of legal rights or land conflicts. In fact, so far as we were able to ascertain, none of the European migrants living in the village had ever been involved in any direct conflict over land or property with any of the individuals they classified as squatters. Rather, the issue of squatters most frequently arose in the context of discussions about "good" and "bad" Ticos (Costa Ricans).

Squatters, or bad Ticos, were unlike the good Ticos—that is, the true *campesino* and/or *cabañero,* in that they were considered to have little or no regard for their place or surroundings. Peter recounted, in a story like those widely repeated by Johann and others, how squatters moved into the village, built some small shanties, planted small gardens along the coastline, and then sat awaiting their fortunes. The expectation was that tourism development would come to the village soon and that they would sell up and be wealthy. In their stories about squatters, they emphasized the tragedy of native Ticos systematically squandering their own land and natural resources. Rather than take the opportunity to acquire a piece of property and start their own business and really make a go of things, those who did manage to acquire land and sell it were usually spendthrifts. They would go off to the capital, San José, spend their money on the high life, and then end up broke and back in Guanacaste without work, money, or property.

For these people, the problem with squatters was that they just had not been able to make an appropriate transition to modernity, and they

were rapidly losing not just their way of life but also their own country, which was being sold from under them. Migrant squatters were, in fact, just one sign of a more general problem, the inability of many rural Ticos to adapt to new conditions. Peter related a story of how a local hacienda owner had lost most of his land when he failed to register it properly with the government some years ago. At that time, Peter said, the roads were barely passable except by oxcart, and the hacienda owner was sure he was both isolated and powerful enough that he would not be affected by changes in the law. Alas, the hacienda owner lost most of his land and left his family with virtually no property. What property they did have left included land with a derelict building directly in front of Peter's hotel. The family had no interest in developing the site but were waiting for someone to make them an offer or pay them compensation to tear it down. The latter was more likely, Peter suggested, since the family really did not have legal title to the land, and the building violated the Marine Terrestrial Zone prohibition on building within 50 meters of the high-tide mark.

This decaying and derelict building encapsulated many of the problems Peter saw with squatters: it was a blot on the landscape, characteristic of individuals who were not really interested in making something of the place because they no longer treated it like their home. Indeed, what Peter and Bridgette saw as really distinguishing them from squatters, as well as from property developers and absentee landlords, was that they considered and treated Costa Rica as home.

Expats and Squatters: Neocolonial Transformations of "One" and the "Other"

The people described in this article are migrants who might be characterized, and indeed characterize themselves, as being in some respects betwixt and between their own and other cultures, or we might say, cosmopolitans. However, unlike the way in which mobile cosmopolitans have previously been construed, these migrant settlers in Costa Rica do not simply live and experience the world at a distance. Rather, they are people who in various ways seek engagement with place and locality. The latter is central to their environmentalist sensibilities and to their attempts to bring together what they perceive to be the best of different ways of living in the world.

At the same time, their stated project to bring together and synthesize traditional and modern ways of relating to place and surround-

ings not only reproduces these categorical boundaries but also extends forms of symbolic and social exclusions through the creation of that which they are not, namely, the squatters. The categorical conversion of the *campesino* into squatter, the good Tico into the bad Tico, is part of a more widespread and systematic moral discourse, among both the wider expatriate community and various transnational environmentalists, that increasingly constructs the rural poor as one of the primary dangers to place and the environment in Costa Rica (Vivanco 2002, 2006). Squatters are denied the social authority and legitimacy of being good people of the land in a situation that continues to be characterized by inequalities in the distribution of, and access to, land and resources. Individuals categorized as squatters are also denied recognition as being rational and strategic actors who are staking their claim in the land-speculation game that has historically been the underlying basis of economic power and capital accumulation, particularly in this part of Costa Rica (Edelman 1992).

The situation described above is by no means unique to Costa Rica. As Sylvain (2002) suggests, with reference to the circumstances faced by various San peoples, those individuals or groups deemed to have "lost" their traditional relationship to their surroundings, whether through choice or compulsion, are consequently disqualified from being truly "indigenous" and hence are without wholly legitimate claims to land and resources. Similarly, groups opposing Aboriginal land rights in Australia increasingly participate in discourse that suggests Aboriginals are not, or at least not any longer, truly living in harmony with nature. Conversely, white landowners (such as cattle ranchers) suggest that they have similar kinds of attached relationships to land as Aboriginals claim to have (Strang 2004, and in this volume).

There are, however, two issues that need to be addressed and clarified with respect to the above. The first is to say something about Costa Rican responses to expatriate constructions of good Ticos and bad Ticos, *campesinos* and squatters. A full answer to this question requires further investigation, and it is important to acknowledge here the limitations of our data in this respect. Nevertheless, we are able to make some points by drawing on the research of others as well as on preliminary observations and conversations with local Ticos during the pilot study. As others have noted, while the rural poor are often identified as squatters, the people so categorized refer to themselves as *campesino* (Vivanco 2006). Moreover, Vivanco suggests, it is precisely against the backdrop of both their perceived environmentally polluting status and the ongoing struggle over land and resources that the rural

poor have consciously striven to reclaim and redefine their *campesino* identity in terms of always having been good conservationists. Similarly, the widely held view of a peasant mentality rooted in locality, unable to cope with the demands of modernity, is challenged by *campesinos* in Costa Rica and other parts of Latin America, who are banding together in transnational social networks (e.g., the *Via Campesina*) to challenge the inequalities of global capitalism (Edelman 2005).

Second, it is important to reiterate that European migrant representations of their own (and others') relationships to place and surroundings are not simply instrumental in the way that Australian cattle ranchers' appropriations of "culturalized" claims of land occupation appear to be. Certainly, Western settlers in Costa Rica, like the Costa Ricans themselves, are very aware of the currency of environmentalism: both employ these strategically in different ways. Furthermore, the environmentalist claims of Westerners by and large still carry greater weight and social authority than do the environmentalist claims of Costa Rican *campesinos,* backed up by greater access to political and economic resources. However, just as important as these differences in wealth and position, we would suggest, are the different sets of cultural concerns and lived experiences that inform their particular articulations of environmentalism.

Western migrants moved to Costa Rica because they felt detached from the world: they sought to be closer to nature and develop a more authentic relationship to place and surroundings. Indeed, one of the central contentions of this paper is that the anxieties expressed by Western social theorists such as Szerszynski and Urry (2006) about the detached and distanced lives of cosmopolitans is one with which these (and we suspect other) mobile cosmopolitans concur and are seeking to do something about. *Campesinos,* by contrast, may be subject to displacement but, we would tentatively suggest, do not feel themselves to be detached from place and are certainly not seeking more engaged relationships with place and surroundings in the same way that Western migrants do.

Following Ingold and Kurttila (2000; see discussion above), *campesinos* might already be said to have the experience of "local traditional knowledge" though they may not recognize it as such. However, precisely because they are increasingly deemed (by others) to have lost (or be losing) that local traditional knowledge, they increasingly are drawn into describing and defending what they do in terms of "modern traditional knowledge": codified forms of knowledge readily transmissible and identifiable as traditional in a global marketplace (see

also Chernala 2005; Choy 2005; West 2005). Western migrants, on the other hand, who think of themselves as lacking the authentically local traditional knowledge, seek to acquire it through living and working alongside others who are deemed to have it in some measure or another. Further, if, as we have already suggested, what they end up with is some kind of modern traditional knowledge, that knowledge is seen by them to at least partially include and approximate in some (but not all) respects local traditional knowledge.

The point is both Western migrants and *campesinos* experience and articulate a hybridity of sorts, but these discrepant hybridities have not led to any kind of common meeting ground precisely because of the different social positionings and cultural starting points of these two groups of people (see Latour 2004). The broader theoretical point is that while certain articulations of hybridity may disrupt and challenge essentializing discourses of identity, hybridity may also be articulated in ways that further extend and consolidate forms of symbolic and material power. Moreover, while the identification with the position of, in Bhabha's (1994) terms, being neither one nor other may have productive potential for some postcolonial migrants and exiles in the metropolitan centers of the West, the "neither one nor the other" ascribed to squatters by those who now claim to combine "both one and other" has very different political consequences and effects. In sum, the space historically accorded the other is now increasingly being taken up and taken over not only by those who claim to speak for and about the traditional other but also by those mobile cosmopolitans who are literally and figuratively moving into the place of the other.

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Notes

1. Biesanz et al. (1999) report 20,000 U.S. and Canadian immigrants, while the U.S. Department of State (2007) mentions upwards of 20,000 U.S. citizens. There are no available official figures for the total number of American and European migrants, but Richards and Hanson (2006) estimate this to be 50,000. Figures for the total migrant population in Costa Rica range from approximately 200,000 to 600,000. The largest migrant group is Nicaraguan, with estimates ranging from 150,000 (*Tico Times* 2005) to 400,000 (*Inside Costa Rica* 2006). However, "unofficially the estimate of Nicaraguans living and working in Costa Rica is really more like 800,000" (ibid). According to Lowtax.net, which advises on U.S. immigration to Costa Rica,

> In March, 2004, the immigration agency (Migracion) said that the migratory situation in Costa Rica was "out of control" and that they would in future be restricting residency approvals to the minimum. Migracion has begun to apply an economic criterion, stating in some cases that an applicant "would not add any input to the economy of Costa Rica or create employment for Costa Ricans." Immigration and residency rules are currently under review in Costa Rica, and in an effort to reduce the numbers of "perpetual tourists," in 2005 lawmakers began considering new rules that will likely make it more difficult to obtain residency in the future. (www.lowtax.net)

New immigration legislation came into effect in August 2006.

2. None of the Euro-American residents and settlers whom we encountered in Costa Rica openly embraced the term "expatriate." Nevertheless, the majority recognized that they might be considered expatriate, and some ironically referred to themselves as such. Most were conscious, moreover, that whatever their own personal situation, they occupied a relatively privileged position in comparison to the majority of Costa Rican nationals, some of whom, they acknowledged, resented their presence. Our reference here to the broader network of expatriates highlights status and power differentials in situations of migration and settlement that might be described as neocolonial (Fechter 2007: 1–13, 17–19).

3. Most of the migrants that we spoke to used the term *cabañero* (sing.) or *cabañeros* (pl.); however, the term used more commonly in Costa Rica for "cowboy" is *sabanero.*

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